

**SAFE EATING GUIDELINES FOR
PREGNANT WOMEN, WOMEN
WHO MAY BECOME PREGNANT,
NURSING MOTHERS AND
CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS OLD**

Freshwater fish caught
in streams, rivers, lakes,
and ponds in
Massachusetts.....

DO NOT EAT



Fish that are stocked
in streams, rivers, lakes,
and ponds in
Massachusetts.....

SAFE TO EAT

Cod, Haddock, Flounder
and Pollock in
larger amounts.....

SAFE TO EAT



Lobster from
New Bedford Harbor.....

DO NOT EAT

Swordfish, Shark,
King Mackerel, Tilefish,
and Tuna Steak.....

DO NOT EAT

Bluefish caught off
the Massachusetts coast. .

DO NOT EAT

Lobsters, flounder
soft-shell clams and bivalves
from Boston Harbor.....

DO NOT EAT

**SAFE EATING GUIDELINES
FOR EVERYONE**

Fish and Shellfish
from the inner areas
of New Bedford Harbor.....

DO NOT EAT



Lobster Tomalley.

DO NOT EAT

**For more information
on how to choose fish
that are safe to eat
contact:**

The Massachusetts
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Environmental
Health Assessment
250 Washington Street, 7th fl
Boston, MA 02108

or call us at:
617-624-5757

or you can visit our website at:
<http://www.state.ma.us/dph/beha>

Revised:
August 6, 2001



The Massachusetts Department of
Public Health ALERTS pregnant
women to the possible dangers of
eating fish caught in
Massachusetts streams, rivers,
lakes, ponds and some coastal
waters.

We advise that pregnant women,
nursing mothers and women who
may become pregnant **DO NOT
EAT** any fish from these
freshwater bodies or certain fish
and shellfish caught in some
Massachusetts coastal waters.

Children under 12 years old are
also at risk and **SHOULD NOT EAT**
these fish.

**A VARIED DIET, INCLUDING SAFE
FISH, WILL LEAD TO GOOD
NUTRITION AND BETTER
HEALTH.**

**REMEMBER FISH IS GOOD FOR
YOU! CHOOSE FISH THAT ARE
SAFE TO EAT!**



What is Unsafe About The Fish and Shellfish Listed in This Advisory?



These fish and shellfish may contain chemicals that can harm you and your baby's health. This advisory does not apply to fish stocked in lakes and ponds.

What Chemicals Are They?

Mercury and PCBs are the primary contaminants of concern. Mercury is a naturally occurring metal found in the environment. However, mercury is also released by burning trash or burning coal for fuel. Once released into the air it can travel long distances and be deposited on soil and in water bodies. PCBs are man-made chemicals that were banned in the 1970s. However, due to their widespread use, PCBs can still be found in our environment and get into our food.

How Do Chemicals and Metals Get into the Fish?



Chemicals and metals get into the fish from pollution in the water and sediments where they live. Larger species feed on smaller species and the process of bioaccumulation begins. Bioaccumulation means that the chemicals or metals concentrate in the fish. The larger, older fish concentrate the most chemicals.



How Do These Chemicals Affect Health?

Developing fetuses, nursing babies, and young children are affected by mercury. Small amounts can damage a brain even before birth. High levels of mercury can affect how well children learn, think, behave, and develop later in life. Children who have been exposed to mercury in the womb can experience symptoms even if their mothers do not. PCBs can also affect developing fetuses, nursing babies, and young children.

Is There a Way of Cleaning or Cooking the Fish to Get Rid of the Chemicals?



Remove the skin, any fatty material and dark meat from the fish before cooking. Broil the fish instead of frying it to allow as much fat as possible to be drained away. However, if the fish contains mercury, there is no way to clean or remove the chemical. It can't be cut, cleaned or cooked out.



Can These Chemicals Affect Adults and Older Children?



Yes. At higher levels, adults and older children can experience health effects from these chemicals. Some of these chemicals can affect memory or behavior. They can make your skin tingle or feel numb. Some are also suspected of causing liver problems and some types of cancer.

Should My Family and I Stop Eating Fish Altogether?

No. Absolutely NOT. Fish is good for you and your family. It is a good source of protein and low in fat. It may also protect you against heart disease. If you may become pregnant or are pregnant or nursing, you and your children under 12 years old may safely eat 12 ounces (about 2 meals) per week of fish or shellfish not covered in this advisory. Otherwise, it is important to follow the Safe Eating Guidelines included in this advisory.

Can I Eat Canned Tuna?

"Light" tuna as opposed to "Chunk White" tuna (also called albacore) has been shown to contain lesser amounts of mercury. Consumers should eat no more than 12 ounces per week. Very small children, including toddlers, should eat less.